

Local Government Mayoral Taskforce supporting People Seeking Asylum

Minutes – Executive Meeting No. 3 Wednesday 10 October 2018

Darebin City Council, High Street Preston

Chairperson: Mayor Youhorn Chea (CGD)

Attendees: Cr Roz Blades (CGD), Cr Matthew Kirwan (CGD), Peter Johnstone (CGD), Anya Murray (CGD), Mayor Kim Le Cerf (Darebin City Council), Mandy Bathgate (Darebin Council)- Minute Taker, Benjamin Fillioli (Darebin City Council), Lynley Dumble (Brimbank City Council), Mayor Paul Klisaris (Monash City Council), Marco Bass (Monash City Council), Fee Harrison (Monash City Council), Emily Webb (Monash City Council), Cristina Del Frate (Yarra City Council), Kate McCaughey (Moonee Valley Council), Meghan Hipper (Moonee Valley Council), Cr Natalie Abboud (Moreland City Council), Laura Cattapan (City of Port Phillip), Nick Butera (Whittlesea Council), Henry Tamasese (Wyndham City Council)

Guests: Connor Parker (The Agenda Group), James McGarvey (The Agenda Group), Jane Favero (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre), Samul Dariol (Refugee Council of Australia)

Apologies: Cr Belinda Coates (Ballarat City Council), Mayor Margaret Guidic (City of Brimbank)

Agenda Item	Discussion Points/Comments	Follow up Actions / Who
Welcome and Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of traditional owners - recording of meeting noted • Noted: early departure advice from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Team Monash at 2.00pm ○ Yarra City Council at 3.00pm 	
Back Your Neighbour Campaign Presentation- The Agenda Group	<p>Connor Parker and James Mc Garvey (The Agenda Group) campaign presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A request for participating Councils to provide case studies/short stories from people who were previously seeking asylum as a way of demonstrating their contribution to society in a tangible way. Councils to generate stories with The Agenda Group support. Completion due prior to formal launch scheduled Monday 22 October. ○ A call for action will be part of the campaign through social media including Facebook. ○ There will be a post launch review at the next Executive meeting on 31 October. ○ The challenge short time frames was noted. 	

<p>'Back Your Neighbour' Campaign Presentation- The Agenda Group</p>	<p>General Comments/Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRC has been working with the Agenda Group around alignment of this campaign and protection/duty of care considerations. • The Agenda Group are working to ensure the campaign is complementary with other campaigns. All campaigns will be connected so if conflict or opportunity arises it can be either resolved or enacted upon. Taskforce members were invited to provide additional campaign feedback to the Agenda Group. • The campaign seeks to engage with a different, more mainstream audience than Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), i.e. people who normally would not participate in a campaign around these issues. • It was noted an art exhibition called 'Home' will be held in Dandenong. A great opportunity for participants to tell the stories from a refugee and asylum seeker background along with mentors. A good opportunity to acquire coverage with media – and be part of message. IKEA is supporting sponsor. • It was also noted the campaign needs to be about the human impact of the cuts. • Having a campaign ambassador was suggested. • The Monday 22 October launch date was decided at first Executive meeting so avoid media conflict during State Government election period. This was included in the EOI brief to tenders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute PowerPoint and video with minutes-CGD • Councils to provide stories and opportunities for the Agenda Group to build into the campaign, including former people asylum and people they know to profile. Send to : Connor Parker, connor@theagendagroup.com.au • Councils to ensure all Councils elected representatives have key taskforce dates in the diaries. • Executive to nominate a media spokesperson
<p>Endorsement of Minutes of Previous Meeting</p>	<p>Moved: Mayor Kim Le Cerf Seconded: Cristina Del Frate</p>	
<p>Review of Outstanding Action Items</p>	<p>No outstanding actions. Moved: Cr Matthew Kirwan Seconded: Mayor Kim Le Cerf</p>	

<p>General Update on SRSS Situation/Sector Advocacy Update</p>	<p>A general update on people facing asylum and the impacts was provided by ASRC and Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) (factsheet tabled at meeting).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through advocacy families have been postponed to be cut off from SRSS until January – 6 month delay. ○ Single adult female and males are being exited. Exits commenced in August with 400 exits (Vic), 800 nationally. Second wave 800 people exited – so at 1,600 nationally. ○ Next wave: 1st November: Single male/female ○ Fourth wave 23/24 December 1,000 anticipated with 6,500 people impacted. ○ It is difficult to get information from the government. Information sourced from service providers. ○ It was noted the spreadsheet for ‘vulnerability’ criteria is currently being assessed by the Department however there is no clarity about the process. ○ ASRC - From 1 July, 225 presented ineligible and 126 people are no longer getting SRSS because of changes. As more people exit – many have temporary jobs and will be impacted as they will not be able to reapply for support. <p>A regional breakdown and further detail has been requested from the Federal Department of Home Affairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Goals/tactics: The SRSS cuts were implemented due to the Department of Home Affairs budget cuts. As the decision was a not a political but a budget decision advocates thought there was leverage to oppose it. ○ Previous meeting with MP Peter Dutton provided no change to decision. More positive meetings held with PM Malcolm Turnbull. <p>Tactic to empower moderate elements of the liberal government to influence. Had a sense that they were getting traction with some support and a good response. The two agencies were about to launch a local campaign via the moderates. The Liberal PM spill subsequently impacted negatively on campaign.</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Minister for Immigration, Michael Coleman – tasked with winning migrant vote for liberal party – so not a lot of scope. Agencies are now reviewing next steps to achieve goals for next election. Goals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stop the cuts in their tracks 2. Eligibility – focusing on number of people now who are not being able to get on to the program. 3. Getting people who have been cut off to be able to reapply and be accepted for the SRSS program. 4. A standing agreement with the department that they might assess individual cases. <p>RCA/ASRC are putting energy into campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focussing also on children in Nauru ○ 50.2% in Wentworth poll didn't support the SRSS cuts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There needs to be a lot of people who have influence over the Liberal party to see change - reaching out to local and state governments. ○ 3-4 weeks will see release of Coalition report looking at the economic cost of cutting SRSS. Headline info is the breakdown re: flow on cost to State governments – being a \$52.8 million cost to Victoria. ○ Complexity dealing with two elections ○ What is ALP position? Response: ALP response vague. Note 15-16 December convention. Unclear about platform re: adequate access to income support, Medicare etc. – it is part of a broader discussion about what support migrants get when coming to the country. Note Bill “Self Sufficiency for Migrants” has been passed. Labour strong on safety net for ‘Australians seeking support – Campaigners have asked that this be broadened to include people seeking asylum. Under Labour the policies will be different but in the lead up to the federal election they have not declared their position. Best to focus on the Liberal party. ○ Executive formally thanked the RSC/ASRC for their attendance and tireless commitment. ○ ARC/RCOA thanked Councils for their leadership and commitment 	
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NSW Council Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Roz Blades, Cr Matthew Kirwan and Peter Johnstone will be attending the Local Government NSW Annual Conference in Albury Sunday 21 Oct. Delegation will meet with interested Councillors/Officers to promote local governments in NSW to be proactive in lobbying against the cuts. • Cr Matthew Kirwan thanked RCOA/ASRC for the idea of having a Mayoral delegation to Canberra. It was agreed by the attending executive group for the idea to be raised at the NSW meeting. • Cr Matthew Kirwan noted potential for interest by NSW councils to be part of campaign and taskforce. The feedback from the attending executive group included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tyranny of distance ○ Logistically, how work load could be shared ○ Noted political differences – can work in the campaign favour and connection with liberal party ○ Opportunity to share information, raise more campaign money ○ See them as campaign allies • Agreed next steps: Taskforce Executive undecided if NSW Councils are interested whether there should be one national Taskforce or multiple state based taskforces under one banner. Happy for delegation to discuss with NSW Councils if they are interested and bring back to next meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCOA Victoria to provide details of their NSW networks to Greater Dandenong • Crs Blades/Kirwan to provide an update at the next meeting
Greater Dandenong Prototype Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now operational with legal matters resolved. Provided outline of program and process including live demonstration of system. • 196 material aid packages distributed between 10 September and 30 September. 690 people are now registered. • Key focus other than distribution is data collection as evidence of SRSS impact. • Other Councils are invited to contact Peter Jonstone for further details. CGD own the product but will make it available to other Council if requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGD to distribute URL to other Councils for their awareness
Joint Statement Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAV Motion for the October State Council Update. Changes made to document and motion is ready for MAV meeting. Thanks to Councils for getting sign off from CEOs to be supporting Council for the Statement. • Nominated MAV delegate requested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Matthew Kirwan to email Taskforce requesting their nomination for MAV delegate • Taskforce to respond by email

<p>Governance Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Member Councils b) Financial Contributions c) Webpage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Matthew Kirwan noted that since last meeting Banyule and Ballarat Councils have joined. • Cr Kirwan is communicating with City of Greater Geelong, Hobson’s Bay Council and Hume City Council regarding joining the taskforce. Now that the medial approach is clear it may be easier to encourage other Councils to join. • Cr Kim Le Cerf noted Kate from Brotherhood of St Lawrence will be approaching Hume Council for support. • Following advice from RCOA Cr Le Cerf noted the importance of engaging with councils in marginal seats within their borders. Examples are Whitehorse, Maroondah, Manningham. • Greater Dandenong webpage regularly updates the Taskforce webpage linked to their site. • This Taskforce webpage is different to the ‘Back your Neighbour’ campaign website. The campaign Facebook page and website will be made available to Executive prior to release. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach marginal councils to seek their participation – Cr Matthew Kirwan • Campaign Facebook page and website to be made available prior to release – The Agenda Group
<p>Regional Humanitarian Response Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Northern Alliance b) PSAAR Taskforce (South East) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Alliance Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cr Natalie Abboud and Cr Kim Le Cerf met with Kate from Brotherhood of St Lawrence who is doing service mapping across the North based around Community Passport models. Discussion around how the vetting/triage process is being supported. ○ ASRC noted increased of presentations to their office that aren’t necessarily asylum seekers. ○ Council refer and direct out to range of services, compared to orgs such as ASRC who have limited resources. Councils also can’t discriminate between different welfare recipients. ○ Need to also monitor and track update as result of cuts. ○ Dandenong Prototype does capture criteria data – but depends on agency and disclosure by client. No guarantee re complete data integrity as complexity exists around visa status and some client information not collected (or not able to be collected). ○ Once passport finalised – with regard to partnerships e.g. Council and YMCA – need to determine how to support referral pathways. ○ ASRC have initiated a new integrated hub in Dandenong. Discussion about replicating a similar model in the north. ○ Whittlesea have just completed their passport and this has been successful. • PSAAR Network (South-East): Peter Johnstone reported – priority areas including advocacy, employment and education, community connections, material aid and fundraising. Fundraising – looking at how to connect to corporate world. 	

Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further business 	
Next Executive Meetings (with rationale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 31 October 1pm-4pm Brimbank City Council Focus: Launch review, next steps for Stage 1 following launch. Wednesday 5 December, 1pm-4pm Moreland City Council, 90 Bell Street, Coburg Focus: Need for Stage 2 determine and plan if required. 	
Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting formal closed 3.36pm. 	

**Next Meeting: Wednesday 31 October, 1:00pm-4.00pm,
Brimbank City Council,
301 Hampshire Road, Sunshine.**